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ABSTRACT

Although simulation is among the least common of the many methods consultants employ to stimulate team development, realistic simulation can help in the diagnosis of management teams. Simulations fill a gap in the repertoire of data collection methods for organizational diagnosis and development by affording an opportunity for direct observation under controlled conditions. A management simulation is an exercise that produces a sample of behavior from which managers can derive an accurate picture of themselves both as individuals and as a group. Just as vital, however, is the infrastructure built around the simulation to collect, assemble and interpret data. Before simulation, managers should ensure: entry meetings, efforts to increase readiness, experiments with experiential methods, the experience of beginning with a low to moderate risk, relationship building, and an understanding of the team in context. After simulation, insight and energy should be channeled into concrete plans for action. To illustrate the application of these principles, the major part of this report focuses on a case study of the experiences of the management of a public agency in a medium-sized midwestern city with the simulation game, "Looking Glass." Appendices provide additional information on "Looking Glass" and feedback from the case study. A list of references completes the document. (JB)

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A Mirror for Managers: Using Simulation to Develop Management Teams

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Robert E. Kaplan
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A Mirror for Managers: Using Simulation to Develop Management Teams

Introduction

In recent years a new interest has been growing up around the idea of holding up mirrors to organizations, of helping organizations discover and learn from their own internal states. Organizational surveys, or climate surveys, have become standard practice in many organizations (Zemke, 1979). IBM, for example, does an extremely thorough job of surveying itself annually and funnelling the aggregated results to teams, departments, branches, divisions. Organizational diagnosis (Argyris, 1960; Levinson, 1972; Alderfer, Brown, Kaplan, & Smith, in preparation) takes a wider methodological cut, using not only questionnaires but also interviews and observation. Organizational diagnosis is an integral part of organizational development, in which the client organization undertakes a widely participative study of itself to discover internal problems which can then be acted upon. Another part of organizational development and another manifestation of the interest in organizational self-understanding and self-improvement is the practice of team development (Schein, 1969).

For a team or organization to undergo some kind of diagnosis is like going to the doctor for a check-up. This can be a routine physical examination, as when an organization conducts periodic surveys to assess its health and well-being. Or a check-up can be prompted by a particular complaint, as when morale is low or coordination inadequate. The medical examination as an analogy, however, is flawed because it assumes a superior-subordinate relationship between doctor and patient, with the former taking the role of expert and the latter submitting to the doctor's expertise. In organizational diagnosis the client organization can and often does assume a collaborative role in relation to the professional--deciding whether to undertake a diagnosis in the first place, influencing the content and method of the diagnosis, and participating actively in interpreting and applying the results.

Against this backdrop can be placed the topic of this paper--the use of a new method, simulation, for diagnosing and developing management teams. The methods ordinarily used in diagnosing organizations or teams are questionnaires, interviews, or both. This is a practice that Levinson (1972)

rues: "One of the major problems with consultants and researchers is that they depend too much on interview and questionnaire data" (p. 36). He makes this statement in arguing for direct observation of people at work as part of the diagnostician's arsenal. Observation complements the accounts of behavior that interviews and questionnaires provide. Despite its acknowledged value, observation is not used more widely because of the expense. In the time it would take to observe two managers at work for a day each, a consultant can interview at length everyone in a 10-person management team. In addition, observational data is as difficult to analyze as it is time-consuming to collect. Unlike interviews and questionnaires which can control the topics on which data is collected, observation puts the consultant in a more passive position, dependent on what events happen to occur. Of the data mined by observation, the proportion of ore to dross is low compared to other methods (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966).

In the considerable volume of literature on organizational diagnosis and development, there is virtually nothing written on simulation as a data collection tool. None of the major works in the field mentions simulation (Argyris, 1960, 1970; Levinson, 1972; Nadler, 1977; Alderfer et al., in preparation) for the simple reason that until recently no organizational simulations have been available.

Simulation fills a gap in the repertoire of data collection methods by affording an opportunity for direct observation under controlled conditions. By giving the consultants more control over what a team being observed works on, and by compressing the team's behavior in time and place, simulation is far more efficient than natural observation. The interaction among team members is easier to observe, not only for the consultants but also for the team members themselves. The result is that the shared experience is more readily available for consultant and clients to learn from.

These advantages notwithstanding, simulation is not the be-all and end-all. First, simulation is limited: It removes the team from its context, so that whatever is learned from the simulation must be placed in the context of the team's history and present circumstances. Second, simulation is powerful: It exposes the members of the team to an intensity new to many of them, and therefore should be preceded in any team development project by suitable preparation. Thus, simulation should be used with particular care and in conjunction with other methods.

This paper is in two parts. First, we present a general model for using simulation to develop management teams.

Second, we describe a particular instance in which the general model was applied. The case study reveals the ins and outs, the ups and downs, the risks and rewards of using this method for the development of a management team and its individual managers.

Steps in Using Simulation for Team Development

Before describing the steps preceding and following a team's experience with simulation, we will describe the experience of participating in a simulation.

Simulation and Debriefs

A management simulation is an exercise that produces a sample of behavior from which managers can derive an accurate picture of themselves, as individuals and as a group. It is realistic; it reproduces the pace, pressure and fragmentation of managerial work. And the simulation is freely interacting; the participating managers have the latitude to take their roles and to move about as they please. The managers work hard or slack off, push for action or proceed with caution, work alone or one-on-one or in groups, communicate in writing or face-to-face or on the phone, build cooperation or suffer breakdowns in relationships--all according to what they, individually and collectively, wish to do and can do. In this way the simulation becomes a screen against which the team can project its usual patterns of behavior.

A simulation of this type is not a brief, single-issue exercise like "Lost on the Moon" or "Hollow Squares" or "Prisoner's Dilemma," designed to make one or two points about group problem solving or planning or competition. Nor is it a leaderless group exercise, like those used in assessment centers, that keeps its participants seated in their chairs. Nor is it a computer-based business simulation such as those used in some business schools, in which a set of small groups compete with each other through a computer. The kind of simulation we have in mind (a) lasts several hours or longer, (b) produces a mass of behavior from which numerous lessons can be learned, (c) builds in freedom for participants to act as they choose, and (d) is interactive in the interpersonal, not the computer-based, sense. Examples with which we are familiar include OrgSim (Miles & Randolph, 1979), SimOrg (Grinnel, unpublished), and Looking Glass, Inc. (McCall & Lombardo, 1982). Looking Glass, Inc. (LGI) is the one we know well and was the one used in the case described later. (See Appendices A and B for more information on the Looking Glass simulation.)

The simulation produces behavior, the raw material that forms the basis for the learning that follows. The simulation is thus a first and vital step, but just as vital is the

infrastructure built around the simulation to collect, assemble, and interpret data. Although data are collected during the simulation by having staff members record observations, a simulation of this kind generates behavior too complicated and scattered to rely totally on expert raters, as assessment centers do. Instead, data are also collected from the participants themselves through a battery of questionnaires that tap perceptions of process and outcomes. In addition, data are collected in a series of discussions that follow Looking Glass and that, in effect, reconstruct what happened during the run. In this sense the reality of the day's events is "constructed" by the people who took part in them. The simulation succeeds sufficiently in recreating the "bloomin', buzzing confusion" of daily organizational life that there is no viable alternative to involving the participants in the assessment of themselves.

The post-simulation discussions, or debriefs, help to distill the raw experience into assessments of group and individual functioning. Produced by the joint efforts of staff and participating managers, the distillate is the identification of developmental needs--those of individual managers and management teams.

The most common use of simulations is to train individual managers who are strangers to one another (Kaplan, 1982). Because of the risks entailed in putting people who work together through the experience, and because of the trouble one must take to minimize those risks, the least common use of simulations is for team development, the topic of this paper. We must therefore examine the extra effort that is spent before a team ever goes through a simulation.

Before Simulation

A. Entry meetings. Putting a team through a simulation is not just a matter of doing it. A good decision must be made on whether to employ a simulation at all and when to employ it. The principles for accomplishing entry are essentially the same as for any diagnosis or development work in organizations (Alderfer, 1980; Alderfer et al., in preparation).

To make a good decision about whether to do development work with a team, all members of the team must be included in the discussion. It is not enough that the team leader commission a trainer to run a simulation for his or her team. A critical mass of commitment within the entire group is

necessary to support development work, and entry meetings are necessary to gauge commitment.

The decision "whether" is distinct from the decision "when"--the team may want to go through a simulation but may not be ready to do so. Readiness hinges on two things: the extent of the team's problems and the team's familiarity and past experience with developmental techniques like team building.

In meeting with the team to assess both willingness and readiness, the consultant actively seeks out any resistance to the proposed activity. To make an appealing presentation and settle for a few murmured words of support is not enough. The consultant's responsibility is to flush out any skepticism and concern and to hold meetings in such a way that people are free to come forward with criticism or anxiety--this includes allowing staff members to talk with the consultant without their superiors present.

B. Preparation: Increasing readiness. Work groups need to prepare themselves for simulation. Simulation, together with the discussions that follow, is a potent exercise in learning from one's own experience, and it is one that few groups or managers have encountered before. They need to build by increments to the level of intensity and threat created by the simulation. The extent of the preparation necessary depends on the group's condition and history and its relationship with the trainers. The more inexperienced the group, the more formidable its problems; the newer its relationship with the consultants, the more important are the following preparatory tasks.

1. Trying out experiential methods. In most organizations, people do not customarily talk about their experience working together, so groups new to learning from their own experience do well to sample this method of learning and make sure they like it. Either an efficient diagnosis or any of a host of experiential exercises can serve this purpose.

2. Beginning with low-to-moderate risk. As exposure to, and inoculation against, the moderately high risk of going through a simulation as a management team, groups should have a prior and milder experience (Kaplan, 1978). A simulation exposes not only the management team but also its individual members to public scrutiny so that a prior activity that concentrates on the properties of the group--norms, communication, effectiveness, morale--while sparing the individual managers, is beneficial.

3. Testing the group's mettle. A group with serious problems will be ambivalent about bringing them up and uncertain as to whether doing so will help the situation or make it worse. For such a discussion to be productive, the group must find a way to bring problems into the open without simply re-enacting them. This is the way to find out--by first giving the group a modest opportunity to talk about its collective experience.

4. Building a relationship between the team and the staff. To benefit from simulation, the management team depends heavily on the trainer's ability as guide, catalyst, and referee. These roles are best played by trainers known and respected by the team. The preliminary experiences described above provide an opportunity both for the trainers and team members to build a relationship and for the trainers to demonstrate their competence.

C. Understand Team in Context. Simulation generates one kind of data. It creates a present-based slice of managerial life, a concentrated source of directly observable behavior. But just as a simulation is a setting well suited to observing a team in action, it is also one that takes the team out of its context. For the trainers to help the team make the most of its simulation experience, the trainers must know the team in its natural setting, including its primary task, history, structures, and patterns of interaction.

The need to understand the team in situ suggests some kind of preliminary diagnosis. (For a comprehensive set of categories to guide data collection in diagnosis, see Levinson [1972].) Diagnosis can serve the dual purpose of educating the consultants about the team and raising the team's awareness about itself. Both consultant and client can then, together, make connections between the team's real world condition and the behavior it exhibits in the simulation. It is possible, even advisable, to accomplish the objectives of the preparation phase via contextual diagnosis of the team; this is, in fact, what happened in the project to be described.

These then are the steps that should come before a simulation is used as a tool for team development: Take the team through one or more pre-simulation diagnostic exercises to give it a low-risk opportunity to sample learning from its own experience; test its ability to benefit from this approach; give it a chance to work with the trainers and test their abilities.

After Simulation: Application

The powerful simulation-and-feedback experience can easily become an end in itself, leaving to chance and good intentions whether the team will actually put its newfound understanding to work. Insight does not necessarily instigate change, nor does the increased energy kicked up by a diagnosis. To raise the probability that the team will benefit from the diagnosis, both insight and energy must be channelled into concrete plans for change. One way to do this is with a "breakthrough project" (Bobbe & Schaffer, 1968)--an activity aimed at doing something about one of the problems identified by the team. The idea is to create movement in an area where the team has bogged down; the problem chosen should be important enough to matter, but tractable enough to bring success within reach. Structure is also important to a breakthrough project--clearly assigned responsibilities, deadlines, measurable results. If the team thus armed achieves a breakthrough, it realizes a tangible gain as well as an intangible boost in self-confidence.

Looking Glass for a Top Management Team

This is the story of one management team's encounter with a simulation. The story follows the steps identified in the first section of this paper, but not exactly. Although guided by the considerations set out earlier, this project, as would be true of any such project, was a product of its particular mix of actors and circumstances.

Background

City Employment Services was an organization besieged. Its environment--the local and state governments, the national economy, and the mood of the Congress--was unpredictable and threatening. Budget and program cuts loomed and layoffs were imminent. The basic premise of the agency--that government should provide employment training and work experiences to the unemployed--was being seriously challenged.

A public agency in a medium-sized midwestern city, CES identified eligible candidates and provided them with employment training and placement. Its budget for providing training and jobs was over $30 million a year. At the start of our project, the organization had 180 people organized into three divisions: Administration, Training, and Employment. The divisions were headed by deputy directors who, in turn, reported to the director. Each deputy supervised three middle managers who supervised a cadre of first-line supervisors.

Our work was confined to the top three layers of the organization--the management team--which totaled 17 managers. This group was heterogeneous. There was fairly equal representation of males and females, blacks and whites, old and young, managers who had been with the organization a long time and those recently hired. We were invited by the director to come and help them function better as individual managers and as a team.

As we soon learned, the CES team also had serious internal problems. It lacked a clear sense of overall direction. Different elements in the management team favored different program emphases. These differences fueled "internecine rivalries" among the various functions. Amidst the heavy load of problems facing the team, priorities were seldom clear, and team members weren't sure what to concentrate their energies on. In general, administrative practices were

in disarray. Mechanisms were lacking for effectively surfacing and solving problems; slackness prevailed, with poor performance tolerated or unnoticed. All in all, the team couldn't get things done and, predictably, its morale was low.

Entry

The agency director initiated entry by inviting us to conduct Looking Glass with his management team. He was familiar with the Center for Creative Leadership from having recently attended a training program, and he knew about Looking Glass from a department head who had gone through it.

First we met for several hours with the director and reached an understanding that included the probable need for preliminary work before LGI. We next spent a day in meetings with the management team, beginning with the executive team--the director and the three department heads. We presented a two-phase plan involving, first, preparation, consisting of interviews and feedback, and then Looking Glass. The executive team listened politely and then asked a number of hard questions:

- Will this project actually lead to change?
- What does it take to make a project like this work? Do we have it to give?
- With cutbacks imminent, how can we justify spending the equivalent of two full-time positions on this?
- With all the turnover in the management team, does it pay to invest in team development?

We then met with the next tier of management--the managers--and made the same presentation. They were curiously unresponsive at first. After our short presentation, only two of twelve were willing to respond, so we divided the group into small, perhaps less threatening, discussion groups. Concerns and expressions of interest soon came bubbling forth, and overlapped with the response received at the prior meeting:

- This is a nice idea but maybe futile.
- There goes a memory typewriter. There go two people.

- This could make us a management team in more than name only.
- What are your skills? Your successes?
- If Looking Glass is set in the private sector, how will the project be geared to the public sector?
- How are you going to build in follow-up and reinforcement?

The reservations on the part of both groups were sufficiently strong that we doubted that the project would happen. Without adequate support there would be no point in proceeding.

In the end, we salvaged the project by modifying our plan. Because of the team's misgivings, we backed off from the original proposal to do a multi-phase project and proposed only the first phase--a preliminary diagnosis as a trial activity. This would cost considerably less and give the team a chance to evaluate the project and to see whether it was worth proceeding to the next phase. Because the team wanted immediate results, we also modified the first phase to include some form of implementation. With the proposal thus pared down and recast, the CES team decided to go ahead with Phase One.

Preparing for the Simulation (Phase One)

The work at this stage had to be an intervention in its own right, in case the team decided not to proceed with the simulation. But this stage was also intended to pave the way for the simulation, should the team later choose to go ahead with it. We decided to prepare the team by conducting a contextual diagnosis. Our reasons were similar to those given in the first section: The team was new to experiential methods on the job and needed a tamer initiation than LGI; the relationship between consultants and organization was new and needed a chance to develop before taking on LGI; the team seemed to be afflicted by serious internal problems and needed to determine whether it would benefit from confronting its problems; the director wanted to use LGI to "identify organizational problems" (as well as to develop individual managers), and the data that LGI would produce needed to be supplemented by data on the organization in its natural setting. The diagnosis doubled well as a trial activity in experiential learning, since it was designed to assess the condition of the management team and was therefore less

threatening than an intervention that included feedback about individuals.

The preliminary diagnosis took a form often used in organizational diagnosis: (a) confidential interviews with each member of the team; limited observation of the team in meetings; (b) a questionnaire, developed after the interviews and observation, tailored to the team and administered to all team members; and (c) a skeletal report offering tentative generalizations about the team (with no individuals identified) supported by quotations from the interviews and a series of meetings to discuss the validity and implications of the report.

With a good understanding and acceptance of the project, team members cooperated fully during data collection. Each person was interviewed, and the response rate for the questionnaire was 100 percent. People were candid about both positive and negative aspects of the agency and the team.

The report. After we dug our way out of a small mountain of data, we produced a report that was preponderantly negative.

Although the team's negative experience far outweighed the good feelings, most people liked their jobs and the people they worked with, believed in the mission of the agency (to help people), and were heartened by recent improvements in the management of the agency. On the other hand, the management team gave itself low marks on effectiveness: People complained that the same problems came up over and over again, without being solved. What decisions did get made were not necessarily implemented. People given something to do were not held accountable for doing it.

For the questionnaire item "CES management performs effectively," the average response was "slightly disagree" (or 3.9 on a 6-point scale), and only one person of 17 either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement.*

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*The questionnaire used the following Likert scale:

1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. slightly agree
4. slightly disagree
5. disagree
6. strongly disagree

In reporting questionnaire data to the team, we collapsed the six scale points into three. "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" became AGREE, "Slightly Agree" and "Slightly Disagree" became UNSURE, and "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" became DISAGREE.

The team also reported tense relationships among different management functions. In addition to what they called "turf issues," the team was split into old guard and new guard--the people, predominantly black, with several years in the agency who were likely to stay on; versus the people, predominantly white, who had been in the agency for less time and were less likely to stay, who had more formal education, and who were more critical of the team and the agency.

The agency also inhabited a hostile and uncertain environment, which made heavy demands but provided neither adequate nor dependable support. In the midst of this unstable, capricious and confusing situation, the team lacked a clear sense of its goals, and judged the agency's effectiveness as leaving a lot to be desired.

Finally, and not surprisingly, team morale was low, dragged down by an almost existential sense of nothingness--too often the agency and management accomplished nothing, and seemed capable of doing nothing about it. (See Appendix C for samples from the report.)

The management team met in various combinations with the consultants to discuss the report. First, because the report was negative, the director was given a preview so that he could absorb the material, work through his feelings about it, and be ready to help his team come to terms with it. Although he was generally aware of the problems and discontent, it came as something of a shock to see it all on paper. Still, he managed to keep in check the instinct to defend himself and his team and, if anything, was inclined to take too much responsibility. At the end of the day he came away not so much deflated by the litany of organizational ailments as hopeful that something might be done about them.

The next step, a few days later, consisted of a session with the director and the department heads followed by a session with managers at the next level. In both meetings, as in the meeting with the director previously, the team members accepted the report virtually as written. The only difference was in the emotional tone of the meetings: The department heads reacted neutrally, rationally, and essentially without overt emotion. They took the posture that "we have a job to do, let's do it." Some managers at the next level were passionate, quick to express outrage and place blame (especially with the executive team). With everyone's awareness raised, the question became one of how to respond to the team's insistence that the project show immediate results. In light of what had surfaced, what corrective action could be taken?

Breakthrough Project

Thus, during the same two-day session we turned immediately from discussing the feedback report to grappling with the question of change. Our strategy was neither to tackle the entire long list of problems currently plaguing the team nor to engage in long-range planning in one or another area. Instead, we challenged the team to undertake a breakthrough project aimed at one important problem area (Bobbe & Shaffer, 1968).

From the long list of complaints, the CES management team assigned top priority to the problem of unclear decision-making process and set about the task of devising a breakthrough project that would model clear and effective decision making. The team chose a problem currently hanging fire in the agency--disciplinary action (for example, for tardiness and poor attendance) and the inconsistency with which it was taken. They designed a simple structure for solving the problem, including timetable and accountabilities. Rolled into the team's project was the agency director's personal breakthrough project, which was to stay in regular contact with the committee and to hold it accountable for orderly and timely progress toward its goal. (It had become clear to him that he had been contributing to the team's ineffectiveness by not following through on decisions.) The project was thus a chance to break out of the rut that had demoralized the team. (More on the project later.)

The Simulation (Phase Two)

At the end of this two-day session to discuss the feedback report and to devise a breakthrough project, the director again proposed that the team go through the Looking Glass simulation. This time, more confident that they would gain as a team and individually, team members agreed. Thus, Looking Glass happened while the breakthrough project was in progress.

Why, the reader may ask, go ahead with the simulation? Were there not enough problem areas identified in the preliminary diagnosis to keep the team occupied for some time? Wasn't one diagnosis enough--why do another one so soon after the first?

Yes, the first diagnostic exercise gave the team plenty to work on, but it did more to identify what was wrong than

why these problems had arisen. We proceeded with the simulation in the hopes that another pass would shed light on the underlying causes of the team's problems and point to specific behaviors that could be changed. Despite the success of the first exercise, the team had not freed itself entirely from its depressed state. We asked at the end of the two-day session: How do you feel now about the state of the team? The most common response was "cautious optimism."

A second reason to proceed with the simulation was to go beyond team development to the development of the individual managers who composed the team. This had been one of the director's original goals for the project, and one to which the managers themselves subscribed. The first exercise had scrupulously avoided discussion of individuals; now the simulation-and-feedback exercise would include attention to both the team and team members. Nor were the two developmental tasks unrelated: For individual managers to take a look at themselves would fit nicely with the team's effort at self-improvement.

Training Design. The simulation and follow-up took three days, apportioned roughly in this way: a day in Looking Glass, a day dissecting their experience in Looking Glass, and a day applying the lessons learned from Looking Glass.

Fifteen of the 17 members of the team took part, filling the roles of president, executive assistant to the president, as well as the managerial positions in two of the three Looking Glass divisions (the Commercial Glass and Advanced Products divisions).* Managers were assigned to LGI roles parallel to their level of responsibility in CES. The agency director was president, two of the three deputies were the VP's and the third was a director, and so on.

Data on the team's experience was collected in three ways. First, the two staff members assigned to each division observed it closely throughout the simulation and took copious notes. Second, after LGI, participants filled out questionnaires about what had been accomplished and the process by which it had been accomplished. Third, in the

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*See Appendix A for information on Looking Glass corporate structure.

sessions held after LGI, data were elicited from the participants in a series of structured discussions. Held in the two divisions, with the president and the executive assistant alternating between the two, these discussions were a kind of group interview designed to assemble information about process and outcomes.

The first session, conducted late on the day LGI was run, surveyed the feelings participants had and the problems they worked on during the simulation. On the morning of the second day, participants in each division discussed how they worked together as a team, analyzed their step-by-step progress (or lack thereof) on a subset of their division's major problems, and considered the feedback from the questionnaires they had completed the day before. Over lunch the president and the two vice-presidents, with the executive assistant sitting in, met to consider how they had functioned as a management committee. The afternoon was given over to an exchange of feedback, again in divisions, on how each participant had performed his or her role in Looking Glass. In all these sessions, the consultants facilitated the discussion and contributed their own observations.

The third day was spent distilling what the team had learned about itself in the simulation, making connections to their ongoing work experience, and planning changes.

Individual Learning. Developing the individual managers was one of the two reasons for using the simulation. Individual learning is an integral part of using Looking Glass, if not all management simulations. Most participants want to know how they did in LGI, want to learn personally from the experience.

The individual learning segment began before the simulation when participants, as homework, responded to a self-assessment exercise. The evening before the simulation managers met briefly and individually with assigned staff members to discuss their assessment of themselves as managers. In a small way this exercise paralleled the preliminary diagnosis of the team.

The brunt of the work on individual learning was done in the afternoon session of the second day, when participants each had a half-hour or more to hear how other members of their division saw their behavior in Looking Glass. The advantage of this session for people who also actually work together is that they are able to draw on their work experience as well as their LGI experience. In many cases interesting parallels can be drawn. To convey the richness of the data on the CES managers' LGI experience and also the

fruitfulness of comparisons with the work setting, we offer the following two examples in some detail:

First Example

Joan, a Director of Manufacturing during the simulation, was the most interactive person in her division, gabbing with her plant managers in the morning over the phone when everyone else sat speechless at their desks. She also held meetings, most in her office, with the plant managers--all longish by LGI standards. She was active and pushed for action in LGI--wanted to get things done by the end of the day. Unfortunately, she didn't set priorities well so that she spent a lot of time on minor matters like designing a new form for appraising plant manager performance and placing summer interns. Thus, she interacted a lot, communicated well, exercised influence, amd pushed for action, but wasn't discriminating about what she worked on and didn't especially encourage her subordinates to influence her (which is one reason Carl, in the next example, didn't get through to her about his major issues).

The LGI-based feedback was very much along these lines. Especially indicative of her penchant for exercising influence was a high score on an index of decision responsibility. Of the responsibility for making decisions in the division, the team attributed 65 percent to her. This high score, which was well above average, reflected both strength and disproportionality. Several people had a similar impression of her at work, where she took strong stands but could be difficult to influence. There were also connections made to her tendency to plunge energetically into everything that came her way at work, without much regard to the importance of the issue or its relevance to her job. In the process she stepped on her share of toes.

Another manifestation of her style was her conversational habits. She was ready to jump into conversation and to stay there. She tended to be longwinded and not easy to bump out of the conversational arena. She had heard this before, but was not aware of the general issue of control.

Another manager took pains, however, to tell her that he appreciated her energy, initiative, and creativity, and didn't want that to be sacrificed as she tempered her self-sufficient style.

Second Example

As one of the plant managers who reported to Joan, Carl spent the morning at his desk (like the rest of the division). He said that at first he responded indiscriminately to his in-basket but by late morning he had set priorities. The priority he chose was the overcapacity problem at his plant (a good choice). Apparently, his one chance to make a pitch for it was a meeting called by the Director of Manufacturing after lunch, but the meeting was unfocused, the agenda mixed the important with the unimportant (10 minutes on placing summer interns), and the Director of Manufacturing kept control of the meeting. Carl reported that early in the afternoon he gave up his attempt to push his agenda. Carl's decision responsibility score was predictably low--6 percent (below average). There was no decision made on the capacity problem in his plant.

In the feedback session, Carl was described as very bright, analytical, incisive, articulate, but quiet and unassertive. His strength was intellectual; his social tools were less impressive. He spent most of his time in LGI relating to paper, and relatively little time interacting. He excelled at dealing with problems and at investigating, but he fell down on putting his understanding to work organizationally. He described himself as a perfectionist: His standards were so high that he sometimes wasted his own energy on optimizing, and he also could lock into conflict with people whose standards were lower. In his self-assessment, he described one flat side as: "[I am a] perfectionist, unwilling to sacrifice my [professional] standards in order to make CES look good or less bad, to get along with other components or to promote myself." That was the essence of the feedback based on LGI.

The discussion then shifted to his role at work, and instructive parallels were drawn. As head of the internal consulting group, he specialized in investigative work, and he and his staff prepared thorough, factual, thoughtful reports. The problem and source of his greatest frustration was that the reports were often not used; his recommendations weren't implemented by the managers responsible for the problems identified in the report. The implementation problem arose for a number of reasons including the general lack of follow-through in CES management and the director's only limited support for his function, but it seemed clear that Carl's own style contributed. He expected the written word to create change and he almost never met face-to-

face with the affected parties to discuss his reports and recommendations and to work out a realistic plan for change. In the session he described himself as "not anti-social, but asocial," which seemed to account for his non-interactive approach. But in attempting to effect change, he avoided interacting with the people he sought to change.

Another aspect was his high standards. To get together with managers, he needed to be willing to open himself to influence. He needed to be willing to negotiate, but he was loath to bend the rules; this may also explain his lack of influence. Thus, a missing element in his role as a kind of change agent in CES was give-and-take about recommendations (instead he waged "memo wars" with the other managers).

Each member of the team was similarly the subject of a fruitful conversation that drew richly on their experience together both in LGI and work. Beyond informing individuals about themselves, these conversations had the effect of giving team members a sympathetic understanding of other individuals and, further, of completing their understanding of the division's dynamics.

Team Learning. On the morning of the third day the team and consultants distilled the post-simulation discussions into a list of lessons learned from Looking Glass. Among the lessons were reasons to be heartened--for example, how hard the team worked and how committed it was to performing well--but most of the lessons shed light on the team's relative ineffectiveness:

1. Deskbound. With few exceptions, they all spent the large part of their day sitting alone at their desks doing paperwork. This included the president, executive assistant, and all but one person in the Commercial Glass division. In contrast to the usual tendency for LGI participants to interact frequently in the process of tracking down information and fighting fires, the majority of the CES managers spent most of their time doing paperwork in a cloud of cigarette smoke.

2. Penchant for writing memos. Not surprisingly, the managers wrote an inordinate number of memos. The 15 participants wrote 150 memos, and our count did not include the several memos that the executive assistant hand-delivered to the president. This was about 50 percent more than the average for a group this size. Nowhere was the overreliance on the written medium more evident than in the fate of new product development in the Commercial Glass division.

Whether this old-line division moves into new product lines depends chiefly on the Director of Product Development and the Director of Sales and Marketing. When it became evident in the discussions afterward that no action on new products had been taken, both directors protested: "But I wrote a memo on that!" Each director had indeed written a memo to the other, and for some reason neither memo was received. But what was remarkable and amusing to everyone was that the two directors had shared the same office during Looking Glass! All they had needed to do was look up from their desks and say something to the other.

3. Very little informal interaction. Tied up in paperwork, the CES managers obviously spent only a small part of their time talking. When they did get together it was typically in formal meetings--longish meetings by Looking Glass standards. Conspicuously absent were the brief spontaneous exchanges characteristic of Looking Glass and of managerial life in general.

4. A hierarchical tendency. When CES managers did communicate, they tended to do so with their superiors or subordinates. A sociogram, based on one of the post-LGI measures, showed that the CES managers had developed strong relationships primarily up and down the hierarchy. Lateral relationships lay fallow and uncultivated.

5. Unclear priorities. Generally speaking, the CES managers did not discriminate well between major and minor issues. During one lengthy meeting, for example, the managers interspersed talk of summer interns and performance appraisal forms with consideration of fundamental problems, without appearing to know the difference in the importance of these issues. The failure to set priorities originated at the top where the president and VP's never made up their minds as to what deserved the attention of the management team, never mobilized their people in one direction or another. The president sat in his office, overwhelmed by paper. The Commercial Glass Vice-President spent the day behind closed doors trying to get through his in-basket, tackling items small and large.

6. Slow progress. Because of the dynamics described above, the going was slow in the Looking Glass run by CES. Only one of the three groups whose progress we charted made enough decisions to fall in the average range for that group. The Commercial Glass division made a below-average number of decisions, and the Management Committee deferred most of the matters before it. Of those actions taken during the day, most were taken by individuals acting alone. Problems that

did not reside in one role, problems that required cooperation across roles, tended to be missed.

As with the discussions of individuals, the CES team had no trouble making connections between their collective LGI experience and their ongoing work experience. They recognized as symptomatic of their work together the excessive memo writing--often a self-protective maneuver in a rivalrous, suspicion-filled environment. They recognized the accompanying underuse of informal face-to-face interaction, especially when grappling with a problem as opposed to merely passing along neutral information. They saw in the hierarchical pattern a tendency to respond to conflicts with peers in other functions by bumping the issue up to their boss. They identified with the lack of a clear sense of direction, the confusion of priorities. They could understand that these patterns of activity conspired to slow down the team, to render it ineffective. The director recognized his usual difficulty in making up his mind about priorities.

Above all, from Looking Glass the CES team took away one overarching lesson. They learned how the team's comparative ineffectiveness played out in unproductive patterns of activity and interaction, how these patterns not only expressed the underlying divisiveness and fragmentation but also, in turn, reinforced the root causes. Herein lies the unique contribution of the simulation. It uncovered the configuration of actual behavior that impaired the team's effectiveness. The simulation enabled the managers to go beyond recognizing that they disposed of problems poorly; it showed them how they hurt their performance as a team. Thus, the simulation lent important additional clarity to the team's understanding of themselves.

Armed with concrete behavioral handles for grasping their condition and improving it, the team made plans to alter their way of interacting. Because the breakthrough project was in full swing at that point, they launched no new formal projects.

We might add that the team's newfound self-confidence derived not only from what they learned but also from the success experience they had had in the process of learning. In confronting their difficulties together they had cooperated better and achieved more than they were accustomed to in their daily work lives.

Aftermath

Upon returning from Looking Glass, the team members seemed to undergo a spontaneous remission from the set of problems that had hampered them. This distinct impression was gained from a data-gathering visit three weeks after LGI. Half the team members were interviewed individually, and the team as a whole was interviewed and asked to respond to the same questionnaire that had been given during the preliminary diagnosis.

The consensus from interviews and meetings was: "It's different." Most people saw a clear shift in management practice and a resulting clear improvement in performance.

The before-and-after comparison on the questionnaire conveyed the same strong message, as Table 1 shows. Although it is possible that a halo effect was in part responsible for the across-the-board improvement, the absence of significant change on two of the variables is evidence that the team members had not lost their ability to discriminate. Furthermore, the increase on most variables notwithstanding, the higher values at T2 generally fall in the 4.00-4.50 range and therefore fall short of ringing endorsements.

The major changes seemed to be ones that grew naturally out of their learning from LGI:

1. More lateral communication and cooperation. Instead of going "up and over" when people ran into problems with peers from other functions, they were working problems out themselves. In direct contrast to the "turfdom" that had run rampant before, inter-unit cooperation was now springing up. This improvement is reflected in the increase on the variable cooperation in Table 1. A notable example was that after two years of battling, a line manager and the manager of a staff function got together and ironed out the longstanding wrinkles in their relationship. One onlooker remarked that "they spent more time talking together in one day than they had in the previous two years!"

2. More direct contact. From LGI the managers learned that they write too many memos and don't talk directly to one another enough. Back on the job they took this lesson to heart and made a point of substituting direct contact, either in person or on the phone, for memo writing. This new mode of communication was associated with the improved cooperation across functions. As one manager put it, "I always knew there was trouble when I got a memo from another deputy sitting in an office 30 feet away."

Table 1

Questionnaire Results
Before and After the Diagnosis and Looking Glass*

Variable	Means at T1 (N = 17)	Means at T2 (N = 15)	t-test Probabilities (one-tailed)
Management Effectiveness	3.12	4.17	.01
Trust (in the mgt. team)	2.85	4.43	.001
Cooperation (among different functions)	3.00	4.30	.001
Agreement on Goals	3.47	4.03	n.s.
Belief that CES can Improve	3.35	4.53	.01
Competence of Managers	3.47	4.53	.01
Absence of Stress	2.47	2.60	n.s.
Agency Staff Held Accountable	2.44	3.60	.01

*The scale ranged from "1" (strong disagreement) to "6" (strong agreement).

3. Better results, faster action. The CES managers connected the way of doing things with better outcomes at their level. As they lowered barriers between units, as they stopped going around their counterparts in other units and started going to them, as they used fewer memos (a slower medium) and more impromptu conversations, they got a better and more timely response from one another. By virtue of the potent combination of a new spirit of cooperation and more personal, direct, and immediate activity patterns, they seemed to be taking more effective managerial action. The higher mean for management effectiveness is another indication of improvement (see Table 1).

4. Higher morale. The diagnosis had clearly shown that the team was demoralized because so much of their efforts came to naught. The persistent theme was that too often when problems cropped up, nothing happened. But the team's new-found efficacy seemed to have boosted morale considerably. The conversations with the managers revealed that practically all of them felt better about themselves. And it wasn't that they had had a good time with LGI: It was that they were applying what they learned and it was making a difference at CES.

Support for the impression that the team could change comes from the higher score on the questionnaire variable, "Belief that CES can change" (see Table 1).

As clear and impressive as these changes may be, they took place in the wake of the LGI experience, and the true test was over time. The long-run task was to solidify the gains and to avoid slipping back into old patterns.

After six months the improvements evident in the wake of Looking Glass had, in fact, tapered off. On every questionnaire dimension on which increases had been registered earlier, a decrease of some degree had occurred. On only two of the dimensions, trust and cooperation, was the decrease from T2 to T3 statistically significant (see Table 2).

Although perceptions varied on how much the team had regressed, the strongest statement came from an individual who had been skeptical all along:

> The change emerging last spring and summer--it was a temporary phenomenon. It's hard to tell why it died out. It's a complex situation. I don't know if it was structural or if it takes too much of an effort. But people are being bypassed again, there are lots of memos, and there isn't the open communication, the open dialogue that occurred during that period.

Apparently, two factors had conspired to stop or erode the gains. A potent influence was a cutback in funding and staff. Three months after Looking Glass, CES laid off one-third of its 180 employees, although the management team remained essentially intact except for two people who had left for their own reasons. Yet another cutback was imminent when we met with the team six months out to take stock of the project. This next reduction in force promised to cut the team approximately in half. The impact of this kind of job insecurity on the management team is easy to imagine. As one person said: "I don't think there's a tremendous amount of

Table 2

Questionnaire Results
Before, Three Weeks After, and Six Months
After Looking Glass*

Variable	Means at T1 (n = 17)	Means at T2 (n = 15)	Means at T3 (n = 14)	t-test Probabilities T1 vs. T3 (one-tailed)	t-test Probabilities T2 vs. T3 (one-tailed)
Management Effectiveness	3.12	4.17	4.00	.05	n.s.
Trust (within the management team)	2.85	4.43	3.50	n.s.	.01
Cooperation (among different functions)	3.00	4.30	3.79	.01	.05
Agreement on Goals	3.47	4.03	4.00	.05	n.s.
Belief that CES Can Improve	3.35	4.53	4.21	.01	n.s.
Competence of Managers	3.47	4.53	4.11	.05	n.s.
Absence of Stress	2.47	2.60	2.25	n.s.	n.s.
Agency Held Accountable	2.44	3.60	3.36	.05	n.s.

*The scale ranged from "1" (strongly disagree) to "6" (strongly agree).

cohesiveness. Because people are worried about losing their jobs, they've become suspicious of each other."

A second factor contributing to the slippage seemed to be a lack of structure for making changes. Planning for change resided with the three deputies and the director, who were to work individually with their own subordinates. Not only were there no overall structures for reinforcing and perpetuating new patterns of behavior, but no one person was appointed, in the consultants' absence, to watch over and expedite change; "No one is carrying the ball for change, and old habits are returning."

The drop-off from the post-LGI high notwithstanding, the changes--due to LGI, the preliminary diagnosis, and the breakthrough project--were on the whole sustained, if somewhat diminished. A number of managers claimed that the improvements lived on. "The changes are very much alive," said one individual. Another stated: "There's a lot more direct communication, a lot less memos, and a lot more interaction among staff at all levels. We're not as concerned about turf as we used to be." This was the perception of a person who had achieved a breakthrough in his relationship with cross-functional colleagues. Another team member enthusiastically proclaimed that "everything is looking up"; he was also someone who had ameliorated previously conflictful relationships with other team members.

In addition, the progress achieved on the breakthrough project and the director's progress on his personal breakthrough project fueled the sense that the team had, on balance, improved. (See Appendix D for an assessment of the breakthrough projects.) In fact, the director's change for the better set a persuasive example that inspired other members of the team. Throughout the project, he led by example, putting himself on the line just as he expected others to do. Without his leadership the project as a whole would not have succeeded to the extent that it did.

In the end, the pockets of increased effectiveness and high morale seemed to produce a net improvement. The sense of an overall change for the better is demonstrated by a comparison of the first with the final questionnaire results. Every gain but one realized soon after Looking Glass had persisted after six months (see Table 2).

Conclusion

If collective self-insight is to guide a team's efforts to improve, then the insight must be driven by data. Simulation is a newly available way to collect such data.

Unlike the most commonly used diagnostic methods--interviews and questionnaires, which gather people's perceptions--a simulation produces directly observable behavior. Unlike direct observation of on-the-job behavior, simulation takes place under carefully controlled conditions that make it easier to capture characteristic patterns of behavior. Simulation for team development, then, creates an immediacy not possible with perceptual methods and a focus not possible with on-the-job observation.

A team that takes part in a simulation is handed a common experience, a rich empirical lode, from which it can mine valuable insights. The simulation carries a double payload: The team can learn about its dynamics, and individual players can learn about themselves. Although the latter can be downplayed, the potential of the simulation would be wasted--like driving a 5-speed luxury sedan in second gear.

To be used most effectively, the simulation should not stand alone; a team's experience-in-simulation is an island that must be connected to the mainland of the team's experience. The simulation generates behavior on its own terms; it takes the team out of its natural habitat. To take on full significance, the team's performance in the simulation must be interpreted in light of the team's real setting and circumstances. This sense of the team in situ is something that the team can, and inevitably will, bring to the simulation, but it is more useful if crystallized and articulated ahead of time by both the team and the consultants.

Another reason to avoid using the simulation alone is the importance of building up to the intense learning experience precipitated by the simulation. In this project the contextual diagnosis-and-feedback provided a good stepping-stone because collecting data confidentially and reporting it collectively is chiefly an exercise in group learning. It exposes individuals less and consequently threatens them less. If the team is able to handle a diagnosis of this type--which is the customary type--then the team is in a position to move on to learning by simulation.

Simulation for team development works best in a symbiotic relationship with other methods. As mentioned,

observations of the team-in-simulation need to be framed by an articulated sense of the team-in-context. The learning of individuals is enriched by coupling insights from the simulation with observations made on the job. Further, learning by simulation is best preceded, in the case of clients new to experiential learning, by a trial activity in self-learning. Just as simulation feeds off companion learning experiences, so the customary methods for promoting development can feed off simulation, with its immediacy and its behavioral base.

The complementarity of simulation and customary diagnostic methods is reflected in the efforts to change that flowed out of each diagnostic experience in our project. From an initial diagnosis--which revealed that the team lacked coherence in goals, was uncooperative across functions, and had no structure for disposing of problems--came a project designed to demonstrate an effective decision-making apparatus. Then the diagnosis by simulation shed strong light on the team's patterns of activity and interaction, and resulted in an effort to revise these patterns, to speed the contact and communication among the managers. Both diagnoses identified problems in team functioning--the first structural, the second behavioral. The first effort to change sought to revise the decision-making structure; the second, the process by which managers interacted. Not only did the pieces of insight fit together to create a fuller understanding, the two passes at self-scrutiny roused the team twice and gave it the emotional wherewithal to break out of its rut.

Simulation for team development is as expensive as it is richly rewarding. It takes a minimum of three days of the team's time to run the simulation and debrief it thoroughly. The time necessary for pre-work and follow-up is extra; in this project the simulation preliminaries rivaled the simulation itself. The simulation is also expensive in staff time, requiring a staff-participant ratio of about 1 to 5. The time demands on the team, the staff-intensive nature of the simulation, and the need to prepare carefully for the experience are all directed toward capitalizing fully on the simulation and minimizing the risk entailed in putting coworkers through an intensive training experience.

Simulation, then, is a useful supplement to other methods of team development and a useful addition to the consultant's repertoire. It cannot, however, be stuffed into one's bag of tricks like a new standardized survey instrument. Nor is it for all teams and all situations. A team must be important enough or troubled enough to warrant the sizeable investment of time and energy. Simulation for team development is a specialized tool for special purposes.

Appendix A

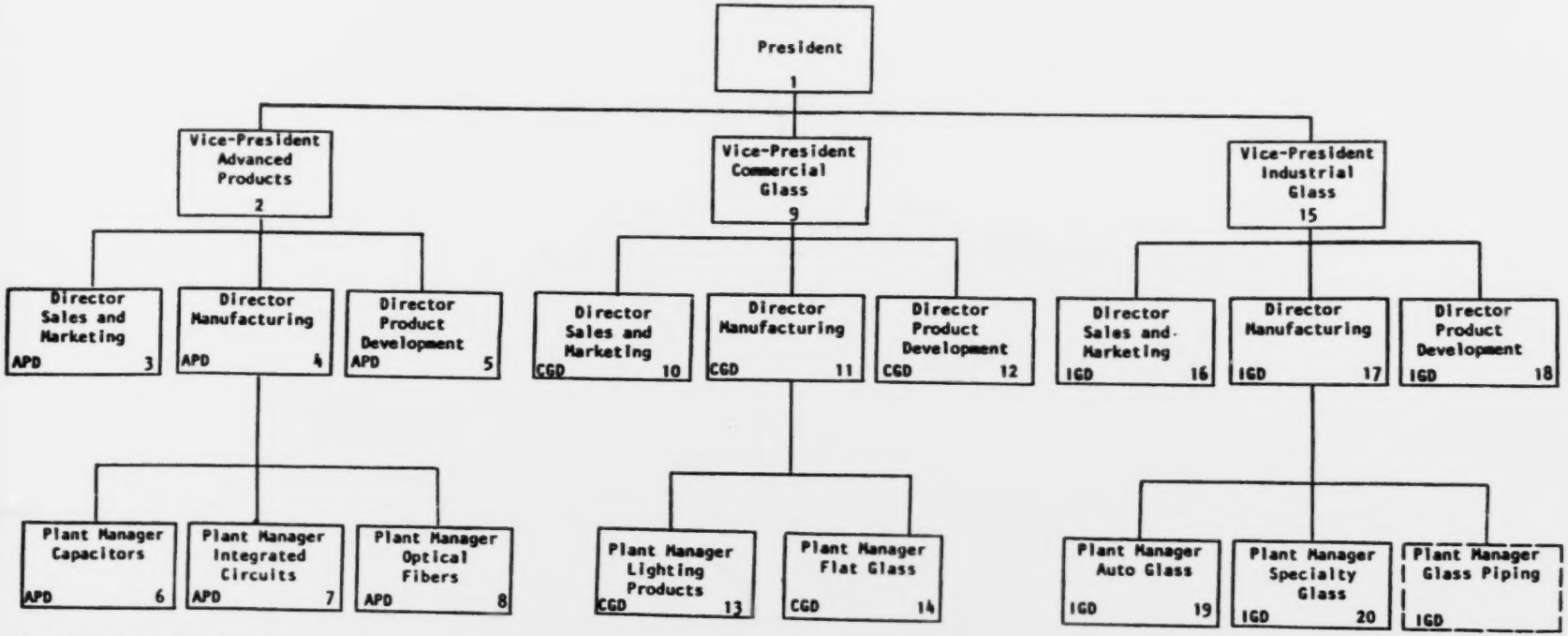
Looking Glass, Inc.

Looking Glass, Inc. is a hypothetical medium-sized glass manufacturing corporation (McCall & Lombardo, 1982). For a simulation, Looking Glass is quite realistic. Complete with annual report, plausible financial data and a variety of glass products, the simulation creates the aura of an authentic organization. Participants are placed in an office-like setting, complete with telephones and an interoffice mail system. The positions actually filled in the simulation are the top management of the corporation, including four levels ranging from president to plant manager (see Appendix B for an organizational chart). The company consists of three divisions whose environments vary according to the degree of change, with one division's environment being relatively placid, another turbulent, and the third a mixture of the two.

Lasting six hours, the simulation is intended to be a typical day in the life of the company. It begins by placing each participant face-to-face with an in-basket full of memoranda. Together with background information common to all participants, this information, which differs somewhat from division to division, level to level, and position to position, constitutes the stimulus. Participants spend the rest of the day responding to these interlocking sets of stimuli, acting and interacting as they choose. Contained in the collective in-baskets of the 20 participants are more than 150 different problems that participating managers might attend to. The problems vary in importance, and they also vary, realistically, in how apparent or hidden they are to the one or more individuals who ought to be concerned about them. Also true to life, the number of problems far exceeds the time available to deal with them.

The Looking Glass simulation is involving, and most managers find it to be an accurate representation of their daily work lives. Research has also revealed a close resemblance between patterns of activity of managers taking part in Looking Glass and patterns of daily activity of managers at work in organizations. Based on direct observations of Looking Glass participants, this research tracked such activities as amount of paperwork, time on the telephone, and time spent in meetings (McCall & Lombardo, 1979).

LOOKING GLASS, INC.



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Appendix C

Excerpts from the Diagnostic Report

MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

1. THE SAME PROBLEMS COME UP AGAIN AND AGAIN.

"There is very little memory in this organization. We cover a lot of the same issues again and again. We don't follow through. We don't care whether something is done or not."

"There are cases where a problem comes up and it's dealt with, but too many come up and either we don't arrive at a solution or it isn't clear who's responsible and it comes up again and again."

2. WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE, THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY IMPLEMENTED.

"We're horrendous on follow-up."

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	You can't count on CES management to implement the decisions it makes.	41%	47%	12%
Item:	Management consistently follows through on its decisions.	12%	35%	53%

AGREEMENT ON GOALS

"They don't all have the same ideas of what their goals are and each manager is more worried about his or her specific area than they are about the total organization. Part of this is accounted for by the administrative policy to regard results on an individual or unit-by-unit basis."

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	The members of the management team agree on the goals of CES.	12%	35%	53%
Item:	There is no consensus in the management team about the purpose of this agency	12%	65%	23%

COORDINATION

1. BUT, IN GENERAL, COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION AMONG UNITS IS LACKING.

"The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. It creates rivalries and breeds conflict among units and ideologies."

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	There are good communications within CES management.	--	47%	53%
Item:	Different functions in CES cooperate well.	12%	53%	35%

2. THESE TERRITORIAL DISPUTES ISOLATE INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS.

"We've got little dynasties here, little city-states. Everybody wants to have the last word. The attitude is very self-protective: 'You don't have to tell me what to do in my department. This is my department. I've been running this thing for 'x' number of years--there's nothing you can tell me. My report's right; yours is wrong.'"

"People tend to have their own domains and like to decide what goes on there. The units don't communicate well together which results in a duplication of effort, a hesitancy to use one another's ideas and difficulty knowing when something's been done."

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	Turf disputes are common in CES.	65%	23%	12%

3. ALSO, MANAGERS MISTRUST ONE ANOTHER IN CES.

"Morale and suspiciousness are the two biggest problems of the agency."

"People here develop camps and interest groups and begin bargaining."

"The trust level [hampers the effectiveness of CES]--it's the natural fear of someone overshadowing you."

"There is great distrust--partially as a result of the last reorganization in which everyone had to reapply for their own jobs."

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	There is a high level of trust among members of CES management.	12%	35%	53%

THE ENVIRONMENT

1. THE OUTSIDE WORLD EXERCISES A LOT OF CONTROL OVER CES, AND MAKES LIFE DIFFICULT AT CES.

		Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Item:	Forces outside CES control the fate of the agency.	47%	47%	6%

"Community politics play a part. For example, delegate agencies go backdoor to the mayor's office. We can't cut off funding for a poorly performing agency if it has strong political connections."

"It's difficult to provide the services we're here to provide because we work in a changing climate--changing and conflicting regulations, peaks and valleys in funding."

"I don't think we've really met the need we could have--because of all the infighting, being overly regulated, politics."

MORALE PROBLEMS

1. MORALE SUFFERS WHEN NOTHING HAPPENS.

"There's definitely a morale problem, but it's relative to what's happening. When something is accomplished, morale is good. When nothing happens, morale suffers--and blame is assigned."

"Management team meetings are frustrating to me because we discuss things but we come out with no solutions, recommendations, nothing--just smoke."

"I don't like it when I can't see the final product of my work. My work isn't implemented; it's filed away and ignored. It makes me feel worthless."

"There are a lot of people around here who are just here--not really producing. They're just taking up space. And it hurts us."

(No questionnaire items available for this theme.)

Appendix D

Results of Breakthrough Projects

The statistical results reported in Tables 1 and 2 are understandable in light of the stock-taking discussions held with the team at the half-year checkpoint. Among other things, the team reviewed the two breakthrough projects, and in both cases saw them as largely successful.

The Breakthrough Project. The disciplinary action committee worked diligently and, with the support of the rest of the team, produced a useful document on time. The deputy spoke for most of the team in saying: "I was impressed with the discipline of the committee members in pursuing their objective. You just have to bump up your energy level and decide to do it. The committee was obviously well organized, and a product did result--that was certainly a breakthrough" [laughter]. The committee was also credited with getting input from throughout the organization, especially from the supervisors who would ultimately be affected by the work of the committee.

Once this preplanned phase was completed, however, the project lost momentum and fell into the old pattern of team decision making. The next phase was implementation, and without mechanisms such as assigning people responsibility and time limits, inaction took the place of action. Again, one individual expressed the view of many others:

> We need to build in some of the structure that was part of the beginning of the project and put it into the end and follow-through. The implementation is not something we should just do. When we had a plan the first 60 days, that seemed to work, but after that the project seemed to disappear.

In sum, the first phase of the project showed the team it could escape from its "nothingness syndrome," and the next few months, when the project began to drift, was the exception that proved the new rule. In evaluating the breakthrough project, several people expressed concern that they proceed to completion, but virtually everyone agreed that the first phase was a model instance of decision making.

The Administrator's Personal Breakthrough Project. Another factor contributing to the overall sense of improvement was the administrator's increased effectiveness. He had, in fact, accomplished his personal breakthrough project. At the

stock-taking meeting, there was strong and almost unanimous agreement that he had changed--that he had become more concerned about task performance and was more demanding. In the chorus of testimony were the following comments:

> I felt it the very next day because he asked me about a whole string of things that I'd been working on--"What happened? What happened? What happened?" Before he just assumed that the task was going to be completed, but now he holds me really accountable. I have really felt it because I work with him closely.
>
> * * *
>
> He is more aware of what's going on, more in tune with what's happening at the staff level. There's very little he doesn't know about.
>
> * * *
>
> He's less concerned with taking care of people and more attuned to organizational issues, what the organization needs. He's less tolerant of substandard performance.
>
> * * *
>
> I've noticed a couple of things, too. One is that you're not kidding [laughter]. I think my subordinates realize that I'm not kidding on certain things that I have absolutely no doubt that you need by X date. Which, by the way, is another subject--that dates are creeping into the assignments. And then if I miss the date, your tickler file is well oiled. So there's some machinery there.
>
> I don't know whether my staff finds it useful but if you're not kidding then I can't be kidding. It's like it's more for real, and it's got to be done. And it may explain some of the improved effectiveness that we were tossing around this morning.

The administrator's improved performance directly influenced the team's effectiveness, not to mention the organization's. Furthermore, by meeting his own goals, he boosted the team's morale. As one team member put it, "If he can change, so can the organization."

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